

Version with Markings to Show Changes Made

1. (Twice Amended) A voice messaging system, comprising:
a telephone line interface;
a voice recorder/playback module;
a controller adapted to control functions of said voice messaging system; and

a ring signal bypass module adapted to detect a presence of a non-ring signal initiated by a caller utilizing said telephone line interface indicating a presence of an incoming call, and to cause said voice messaging system to direct [answer] said incoming call to said voice recorder/playback module without an audible [before reception of an initial] ring signal [relating] to announce said incoming call by said voice messaging system.

4. (Three Times Amended) A method of allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system, comprising:

receiving a non-ring signal initiated by a caller at a telephone line interface indicating a presence of an incoming call to said voice messaging system; and

answering said incoming call by said voice messaging system without an audible [before a reception of any] ring signal to announce said incoming call by said voice messaging system.

8. (Three Times Amended) Apparatus for allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system, comprising:

means for receiving a non-ring signal initiated by a caller at a telephone line interface indicating a presence of an incoming call to said voice messaging system; and

means for answering said incoming call by said voice messaging system without an audible [before a reception of any] ring signal to announce said incoming call by said voice messaging system.

12. (Amended) A method of allowing a calling party to bypass a ring signal in a voice messaging system of a called party, said voice messaging system including voice message memory for recording a voice message, the method comprising:

providing a ring signal bypass module in said voice messaging system;

activating said ring signal bypass module based on a request from said calling party; and

bypassing [all] an audible ring signal[s to] by said voice messaging system announcing an incoming call from [by answering a call from] said calling party to [by] said voice messaging system [before a reception of any ring signal by said voice messaging system].

REMARKS

Claim 7 is canceled herein. Claims 1, 4, 8 and 12 are amended herein. Claims 1-6 and 8-15 are now pending in this application.

Claims 1-6, 8-10 and 12 over Koyama and Shepherd

In the Office Action, claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being obvious over Koyama, U.S. Patent No. 5,894,505 ("Koyama") in view of Shepherd, U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0051528 A1 ("Shepherd"); and claims 4-6, 8-10 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being obvious over Shepherd in view of Koyama. The Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections.

Claims 1-3 recite, *inter alia*, a ring signal bypass module adapted to detect a presence of a non-ring signal initiated by a caller utilizing a telephone line interface indicating a presence of an incoming call, and to cause a voice messaging system to direct the incoming call to a voice recorder/playback module without an audible ring signal to announce the incoming call by the voice messaging system. Claim 12 recites, *inter alia*, activating a ring signal bypass module based on a request from a calling party and bypassing an audible ring signal by a voice messaging system announcing an incoming call from a calling party to a voice messaging system.

Koyama appears to disclose a calling party that calls a telephone answering machine, with a polarity reverse signal being transmitted to the telephone answering machine indicating a transmission of calling party information (Koyama, col. 10, lines 3-8). A main control unit generates a communication path to an exchange, to make the calling party information reception unit receive calling party information (Koyama, col. 10, lines 22-27).

The Office Action relies on Shepherd to allegedly make up for the deficiencies in Koyama to arrive at the claimed invention. The Applicants respectfully disagree.

Shepherd appears to disclose a service switching point of a telecommunications network that receives signaling from a first customer telephone for a destination customer line (Abstract). The call may be diverted to

another telephone or network apparatus arranged to provide voice information and/or data collection facilities to determine a destination of the incoming call (Shepherd, Abstract). A no-ring call to a second customer's premises equipment is used for purposes of collecting data (Shepherd, paragraph 0007).

Koyama discloses the transmission of calling party information to a telephone answering machine. Koyama fails to any type of ring signal bypass module, much less a ring signal bypass module used with a voice messaging system to direct an incoming call to a voice recorder/playback module without an audible ring signal and bypassing an audible ring signal, as recited by claims 1-3 and 12.

Shepherd discloses collecting data from a called customer's premises equipment through use of a no-ring call. Shepherd fails to disclose a ring signal bypass module used in conjunction with a voice messaging system without an audible ring signal and bypassing an audible ring signal, as recited by claims 1-3 and 12.

Neither Koyama nor Sheperd, either alone or in combination, disclose, teach or suggest a ring signal bypass module used with a voice messaging system to direct an incoming call to a voice recorder/playback module without an audible ring signal and bypassing an audible ring signal, as recited by claims 1-3 and 12.

Claims 4-6 and 8-10 recite, *inter alia*, receiving a non-ring signal initiated by a caller at a telephone line interface indicating a presence of an incoming call to a voice messaging system and answering the incoming call by the voice messaging system without an audible ring signal to announce the incoming call by the voice messaging system.

As discussed above, Koyama discloses a telephone line interface receiving calling party information from a calling party. Koyama fails to disclose receiving a non-ring signal by a telephone line interface, much less receiving a non-ring signal by a telephone line interface indicating a presence of an incoming call to a voice messaging system and answering the incoming call by the voice messaging system without an audible ring signal to announce the incoming call by the voice messaging system, as recited by claims 4-6 and 8-10.

As discussed above, Shepherd discloses a non-ring signal used to collect data from a called customer's premises equipment. The customer premises equipment is not a voice messaging system and does **NOT** answer an incoming call by without an audible ring signal to announce the incoming call by a voice messaging system, as recited by claims 4-6 and 8-10.

Neither Koyama nor Sheperd, either alone or in combination, disclose, teach or suggest receiving a non-ring signal initiated by a caller at a telephone line interface indicating a presence of an incoming call to a voice messaging system and answering the incoming call by the voice messaging system without an audible ring signal to announce the incoming call by the voice messaging system, as recited by claims 4-6 and 8-10.

Accordingly, for at least all the above reasons, claims 1-6, 8-10 and 12 are patentable over Koyama and Shepherd. It is therefore respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 7, 11 and 13-15 over Shepherd, Koyama and Borland

In the Office Action, claims 7, 11 and 13-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being obvious over Shephard in view of Koyama, and further in view of Borland et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,128,382 ("Borland"). The Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections.

Claims 7, 11 and 13-15 are dependent on claims 4, 8 and 12, respectively, and are allowable for at least the same reasons as claims 4, 8 and 12.

Claims 7 and 11 recite, *inter alia*, receiving a non-ring signal initiated by a caller at a telephone line interface indicating a presence of an incoming call to a voice messaging system and answering the incoming call by the voice messaging system without an audible ring signal to announce the incoming call by the voice messaging system.

As discussed above, neither Koyama nor Sheperd, either alone or in combination, disclose, teach or suggest receiving a non-ring signal initiated by a caller at a telephone line interface indicating a presence of an incoming call to a voice messaging system and answering the incoming call by the voice

messaging system without an audible ring signal to announce the incoming call by the voice messaging system, as recited by claims 7 and 11.

The Office Action relies on Borland to allegedly make up for the deficiencies in Shepherd and Koyama to arrive at the claimed invention. The Applicants respectfully disagree.

Borland appears to disclose a telephone system that enables a caller to leave a message on a telephone without the telephone first generating a ring sound (Abstract). According to Borland, a telephone receives an incoming telephone call from a caller, and if a ring/message option feature is enabled, the telephone answers the incoming call prior to the telephone generating a ring sound and allows the caller to then leave a message (Borland, Abstract). The telephone includes a ring/message option switch that is a toggle switch for turning the ring/message option feature on and off (Borland, col. 4, lines 51-54). Alternately, the ring/message feature is activated and deactivated by lifting handset and entering a numeric code using the telephone keypad (Borland, col. 4, lines 55-59).

Borland requires the owner of a customer premises equipment to either press a button or lift a handset and enter a numeric code to activate the no ring answering machine. An owner of a customer premises equipment activating a no ring answering machine is **NOT** receiving a non-ring signal initiated by a caller at a telephone line interface, much less receiving a non-ring signal initiated by a caller at a telephone line interface indicating a presence of an incoming call to a voice messaging system and answering the incoming call by the voice messaging system without an audible ring signal to announce the incoming call by the voice messaging system, as recited by claims 7 and 11.

Neither Koyama, Sheperd nor Borland, either alone or in combination, disclose, teach or suggest receiving a non-ring signal initiated by a caller by a telephone line interface indicating a presence of an incoming call to a voice messaging system and answering the incoming call by the voice messaging system without an audible ring signal to announce the incoming call by the voice messaging system, as recited by claims 7 and 11.

Claims 13-15 recite, *inter alia*, activating a ring signal bypass module based on a request from a calling party and bypassing an audible ring signal by a voice messaging system announcing an incoming call from a calling party to a voice messaging system.

As discussed above, neither Koyama nor Sheperd, either alone or in combination, disclose, teach or suggest activating a ring signal bypass module based on a request from a calling party and bypassing an audible ring signal by a voice messaging system announcing an incoming call from a calling party to a voice messaging system, as recited by claims 13-15.

The Office Action relies on Borland to allegedly make up for the deficiencies in Shepherd and Koyama to arrive at the claimed invention. The Applicants respectfully disagree.

As discussed above, Borland requires the owner of a customer premises equipment to either press a button or lift a handset and enter a numeric code to activate the no ring answering machine. Activating a ring bypass module based on a request from an owner of a customer premises equipment is **NOT** activating a ring signal bypass module based on a request from a calling party, as recited by claims 13-15.

Neither Shepherd, Koyama nor Borland, either alone or in combination, disclose, teach or suggest activating a ring signal bypass module based on a request from a calling party and bypassing an audible ring signal by a voice messaging system announcing an incoming call from a calling party to a voice messaging system, as recited by claims 13-15.

A benefit of allowing a calling party to initiate a ring bypass is, e.g., that important calls from a caller can still create a ringing announcement. Borland discloses a system allows an owner of a voice messaging system to bypass a ring signal. When a button or code is entered, all calls to the voice messaging system will activate a ring bypass module and not create a ringing announcement. However, important calls where the call must reach the owner of the voice messaging system will also not ring through. Applicants' invention allows the calling party to control if the called party's voice messaging system

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will ring. Unimportant calls can activate a ring bypass module and important calls can be handled as conventional calls with a ringing announcement.

Accordingly, for at least all the above reasons, claims 7, 11 and 13-15 are patentable over Koyama and Shepherd. It is therefore respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

Conclusion

All objections and rejections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the subject application is in condition for allowance and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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